

# JOURNAL OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY.

Part I.—HISTORY, LITERATURE, &c.

No. IV.—1872.

*The Tirthas of Vrindá-vana and Gokula.*—By F. S. GROWSE, M. A.,  
B. C. S.

## 1. Vrinda'-vana.

Some six miles above Mathurá is a point where the right bank of the Jamuná assumes the appearance of a peninsula, owing to the eccentricity of the stream, which first makes an abrupt turn to the north and then as sudden a return upon its accustomed southern course. Here, washed on three of its sides by the sacred flood, stands the town of Brindá-ban, at the present day a rich and increasing municipality and for many centuries past one of the most holy places of the Hindús. A little higher up the stream, a similar promontory occurs, and in both cases the curious formation is traditionally ascribed to the resentment of Baladeva. He, it is said, forgetful one day of his habitual reserve, and emulous of his younger brother's popular graces, led out the Gopis for a dance upon the sands. But he performed his part so badly, that the Jamuná could not forbear from taunting him with his failure, and recommending him never again to exhibit so clumsy an imitation of Krishna's agile movements. The stalwart god was much vexed at this criticism and, taking up the heavy plough which he had but that moment laid aside, he drew with it so deep a furrow from the shore that the unfortunate river perforce fell into it, was drawn helplessly away and has never since been able to recover its original channel.

Such is the local rendering of the legend; but in the Puránas and other early Sanskrit authorities, the story is differently told, in this wise; that as Balaráma was roaming through the woods of Brindá-ban, he found concealed in the cleft of a *kadamb* tree some spirituous liquor, which he at once consumed with his usual avidity. Heated by intoxication he longed above all

things for a bathe in the river, and seeing the Jamunā at some little distance, he shouted for it to come near. The stream, however, remained deaf to his summons; whereupon the infuriated god took up his ploughshare and breaking down the bank drew the water into a new channel, and forced it to follow wherever he led. In the Bhāgavata it is added that the Jamunā is still to be seen following the course along which she was thus dragged. Professor Wilson in his edition of the Vishnu Purāna says, "The legend probably alludes to the construction of canals from the Jamunā for the purpose of irrigation; and the works of the Muhammadans in this way, which are well known, were no doubt preceded by similar canals dug by order of Hindú princes." Upon this suggestion, it may be remarked first that in Upper India no irrigation works of any extent are known ever to have been executed either by Hindús or Muhammadans; certainly, there are no traces of any such operations in the neighbourhood of Brindāban; and secondly, both legends represent the Jamunā itself as diverted from its straight course into a single winding channel, not as divided into a multiplicity of streams. Hence it may more reasonably be inferred that the still existing involution of the river is the sole foundation for the myth.

Like most of the local names in the vicinity, the word Brindāban is derived from an obvious physical feature and, when first attached to the spot, signified no more than the "tulsi grove," *brindā* and *tulsi* being synonymous terms, used indifferently to denote the sacred aromatic herb, known to botanists as *Ocymum sanctum*.

But this explanation is far too simple to find favour with the more modern and extravagant school of Vaishnava sectaries; and in the Brahma Vaivanta Purāna, a mythical personage has been invented bearing the name of Vrindā. According to that spurious composition (Brah. Vai., v. iv. 2) the deified Rādhā, though inhabiting the Paradise of Goloka, was not exempt from human passions, and in a fit of jealousy condemned a Gopa by name Sridāma to descend upon earth in the form of the demon Sankhāchura. He in retaliation sentenced her to become a nymph of Brindāban; and there accordingly she was born, being as was supposed the daughter of Kēdāra, but in reality the divine mistress of Krishna; and it was simply his love for her which induced the god to leave his solitary throne in heaven and become incarnate. Hence in the following exhaustive list of Rādhā's titles as given by the same authority (Brah. Vai., v. iv. 17) there are several which refer to her predilection for Brindāban:

*Rudhī, Rasesvari, Rāsavāsini, Rāsikesvari,*  
*Krishna-prānādhikā, Krishna-priya, Krishna-swarūpini,*  
*Krishnā, Vrindāvani, Vrindā, Vrindāvana-vinodini,*  
*Chandāvati, Chandra-kāntā, Sata-chandra-nibhānanā,*  
*Krishna-vāmānga-sambhūtā, Paramānanda-rūpini.*

There is no reason to suppose that Brindā-ban was ever the seat of any large Buddhist establishment; and though from the very earliest period of Brahmanical history it has enjoyed high repute as a sacred place of pilgrimage, it is probable that for many centuries it was merely a wild uninhabited jungle, a description still applicable to Bhāndir-ban on the opposite side of the river, a spot of equal celebrity in Sanskrit literature. It was only about the middle of the sixteenth century after Christ that some holy men from other parts of India came and settled there and built a small shrine, which they dedicated to Brindā Devī. It is to their high reputation for sanctity that the town is primarily indebted for all that it now possesses. Its most ancient temples, four in number, take us back only to the reign of our own Queen Elizabeth; the stately courts that adorn the river bank and attest the wealth and magnificence of the Bharatpur Rājās, date only from the middle of last century; while the space now occupied by a series of the largest and most magnificent shrines ever erected in Upper India was fifty years ago an unclaimed belt of jungle and pasture-ground for cattle. Now that communication has been established with the remotest parts of India, every year sees some splendid addition made to the artistic treasures of the town; as wealthy devotees recognize in the stability of British rule an assurance that their pious donations will be completed in peace and remain undisturbed in perpetuity.

At the present time there are within the limits of the municipality about a thousand temples, including of course many which strictly speaking are merely private chapels, and fifty ghāts constructed by as many Rājās. The peacocks and monkeys, with which the place abounds, enjoy the benefit of special endowments, bequeathed by deceased Princes of Kotā and Bharatpur. There are some fifty ehatras, or dole houses, for the distribution of alms, and extraordinary donations are not unfrequently made by royal and distinguished visitors. Thus the Rājā of Dātiā, a few years ago, made an offering to every single shrine and every single Brāhman that was found in the city. The latter order constitute a fourth of the whole population, which amounts to 21,000; while the Bairāgis and Vaishnavas also muster strong, being in all not less than 5000 or 6000. The Vaishnavas are of five schools or Sampradāyas, called respectively Śrī Vaishnava, Vishnu Swāmi (this is the predominant class at Gokul), Nimārak Vaishnava, and Mādhava Vaishnava. In the time of the emperors, the Muhammadans made a futile attempt to abolish the ancient name, Brindā-ban, and in its stead substitute that of Mūminābād; but now more wisely they leave the place to its own Hindū name and devices, and keep themselves as clear of it as possible. Thus, besides an occasional official, there are in Brindā-ban no followers of the prophet beyond only some fifty families who live close together in its outskirts, and are all of the humblest order, such as oilmen, lime-burners, and the like.

But, as said above, the foundation of all this material prosperity and religious exclusiveness was laid by the Gosáins who established themselves there in the reign of Akbar. The leaders of the community were by name Rúpa and Sanátana from Gaur in Bengal. They were accompanied by six others, of whom three, Jíva, Madhu and Gopal Bhat, came from the same neighbourhood, Swámi Hari Dás from Rájpur in the Mathurá District, Hari bans from Deva-ban in Saháranpur, and Byás Hari Rám from Orchá in Bundelkhand. It is said that, in 1570, the emperor was induced to pay them a visit, and was taken blindfold into the sacred enclosure of the Nidhan,\* where such a marvellous vision was revealed to him, that he was fain to acknowledge the place as indeed holy ground. Hence the cordial support which he gave to the attendant Rájás, when they declared their intention of erecting a series of buildings more worthy of the local divinity.

The four temples, commenced in honour of this event, still remain, though in a ruinous and sadly neglected condition. They bear the titles of Gobind Deva, Gopí-náth, Jugál-kishor, and Madan Mohan. The first named is not only the finest of this particular series, but is the most impressive religious edifice that Hindú art has ever produced, at least in Upper India. The body of the building is in the form of a Greek cross, the nave being a hundred feet in length and the breadth across the transepts the same. The central compartment is surmounted by a dome of singularly graceful proportions; and the four arms of the cross are roofed by a waggon vault of pointed form, not—as is usual in Hindú architecture—composed of overlapping brackets, but constructed of true radiating arches as in our Gothic cathedrals. The walls have an average thickness of ten feet, and are pierced in two stages, the upper stage being a regular triforium, to which access is obtained by an internal staircase. At the east entrance of the nave, a small narthex projects fifteen feet; and at the west end, between two niches and incased in a rich canopy of sculpture, a square-headed doorway leads into the choir, a chamber some twenty feet deep. Beyond this was the sacarium, flanked on either side by a lateral chapel; each of these three cells being of the same dimensions as the choir and like it vaulted by a lofty dome. The general effect of the interior is not unlike that produced by St. Paul's cathedral in London. The latter building has greatly the advantage in size, but in the other, the central dome is more elegant, while the richer decoration of the wall surface and the natural glow of the red sandstone supply that relief and warmth of colouring which are so lamentably deficient in its Western rival.

\* The derivation of this word is a little questionable. It is the local name of the actual Brindá grove, to which the town owes its origin. The spot so designated is now of very limited area, hemmed in on all sides by streets, but protected from further encroachment by a high masonry wall.



There must originally have been seven towers, one over the central dome, one at the end of each transept, and the other four covering respectively the choir, sacrarium and two chapels. The sacrarium has been utterly razed to the ground, and the other six towers levelled with the roof of the nave. Their loss has terribly marred the effect of the exterior, which must have been extremely majestic when the west front with its lofty triplet was supported on either side by the pyramidal mass of the transepts and backed by the still more towering height that crowned the central dome. The choir tower was of slighter elevation; occupying the same relative position as the spirelet over the sanctus bell in Western ecclesiology. The ponderous walls, albeit none too massive to resist the enormous thrust once brought to bear upon them, now, however much relieved by exuberant decoration, appear out of all proportion to the comparatively low superstructure. As a further disfigurement, a plain masonry wall has been run along the top of the centre dome. It is generally believed that this was built by Aurangzib for the purpose of desecrating the temple; though it is also said to have been put by the Hindús themselves to assist in some grand illumination. In either case it is an ugly modern exerecence, and steps should be at once taken for its removal.

Under one of the niches at the west end of the nave is a tablet with a long Sanskrit inscription. This has unfortunately been much mutilated, but enough remains as record of the fact that the temple was built in *Sambat* 1617, *i. e.*, A. D. 1590, under the direction of the two Gurus Rúpa and Sanátana. The founder, Rájá Mán Siñha, was a Kaehhwáhá Thákur, son of Rájá Bhagawán Dás of Amber, founder of the temple at Gobardhan, and an ancestor of the present Rájá of Jaypur. He was appointed by Akbar successively Governor of the districts along the Indus, of Kábul, and of Bihár. By his exertions, the whole of Orísá and Eastern Bengal were reannexed; and so highly were his merits appreciated at court, that though a Hindú, he was raised to a higher rank than any other officer in the realm. He married a sister of Lakshmi Náráyan, Rájá of Koch Bihár, and at the time of his decease, which was in the 9th year of the reign of Jahángir, he had living one son, Bháo Siñha, who succeeded him upon the throne of Amber, and died in 1621, A. D.\* There is a tradition to the effect that Akbar at the last, jealous of his powerful vassal, and desirous to rid himself of him, had a confectio prepared, part of which contained poison; but caught in his own snare he presented the innocuous portion to the Rájá and ate that drugged with death himself. The unworthy deed is explained by Mán Siñha's design, which apparently had reached the Emperor's ears, to alter the succession in favour of Khusrau, his nephew, instead of Salím.†

\* *Vide* Professor Blochmann's *Áin i Akbarí*, p. 341.

† The above tradition is quoted from Tod's *Rájasthán*.

In anticipation of a visit from Aurangzib, the image of the god was transferred to Jaypur, and the Gosáin of the temple there has ever since been regarded as the head of the endowment. The name of the present incumbent is Syám Sundar, who has two agents resident at Brindá-ban. There is said to be still in existence at Jaypur the original plan of the temple, shewing its seven towers, but there is a difficulty in obtaining any definite information on the subject. However, local tradition is fully agreed as to their number and position; while their architectural character can be determined beyond a doubt by comparison with the smaller temples of the same age and style, the ruins of which still remain. It is therefore not a little strange that of all the architects who have described this famous building, not one has noticed this, its most characteristic feature: the harmonious combination of dome and spire is still quoted as the great crux of modern art, though nearly 300 years ago the difficulty was solved by the Hindús with characteristic grace and ingenuity.

It is much to be regretted that this most interesting monument has not been declared national property and taken under the immediate protection of Government. At present no care whatever is shewn for its preservation: large trees are allowed to root themselves in the fissures of the walls, and in the course of a few more years the damage done will be irreparable. As a modern temple under the old dedication has been erected in the precincts, no religious prejudices would be offended by the state's appropriation of the ancient building. If any scruples were raised, the objectors might have the option of themselves undertaking the necessary repairs. But it is not probable that they would accept the latter alternative; for though the original endowment was very large, it has been considerably reduced by mismanagement, and the ordinary annual income is now estimated at no more than Rs. 17,500,\* the whole of which is absorbed in the maintenance of the modern establishment.

The next temple to be described, *viz.* that of Madan Mohan, one of Krishna's innumerable titles, stands at the upper end of the town on the river-bank near the Káli-mardan Ghát, where the god trampled on the head of the great serpent Káli. It consists of a nave 57 feet long, with a choir of 20 feet square at the west end, and a sanctuary of the same dimensions beyond. The total height of the nave would seem to have been only about 22 feet, but its vaulted roof has entirely disappeared: the upper part of the choir tower has also been destroyed. That surmounting the sacarium is a lofty octagon of curvilinear outline tapering towards the summit; and attached to its south side is a tower-crowned chapel of precisely similar elevation, and differing only in the one respect that its exterior surface is enriched with

\* Of this sum only Rs. 4,500 are derived from land and house property; the balance of Rs. 13,000 is made up by votive offerings.

sculptured panels, while the other is quite plain. Over its single door, which is at the east end, is a Sanskrit inscription, given first in Beugali and then in Nágari characters, which runs as follows :

हर इव गुरुवंशो यत्पिता रामचन्द्रो  
गुणिसणिरिव पुत्रो यस्य राधावसन्तः ।  
सकृतसुकृतराशिः श्रीगुणानन्दनामा  
व्यधितविधिवद्देतन्मन्दिरं नन्दसूत्रोः ॥

The above, it is believed, has never been copied before. As the letters were raised, instead of incised, and also much worn, a transcript was a matter of some little difficulty ; and the Brahman in charge of the shrine declared the inscription to be absolutely illegible, or at least if the letters could be decyphered, quite unintelligible. The information it gives is certainly not very perspicuous, and there is no indication of a date ; but we are enabled to gather thus much that the chapel at all events was founded by a Guliavansa,\* bearing the name of Gunánand. The main building, which may possibly be a little older, is popularly ascribed to one Rám Dás, a Kshatriya of Multán. The court-yard is entered, after the ascent of a flight of steps, through a massive square gateway with a pyramidal tower, which groups very effectively with the two towers of the temple. As the buildings are not only in ruins, but also from peculiarities of style ill-adapted to modern requirements, they are seldom if ever used for religious service, which is ordinarily performed in an elegant and substantial edifice erected on the other side of the street under the shadow of the older fane. The annual income is estimated at Rs. 10,100 ; of which sum Rs. 8,000 are the voluntary offerings of the faithful, while only Rs. 2,100 are derived from permanent endowment. A branch establishment at Rádhá Kund with the same dedication is also supported from the funds of the parent house.

The temple of Gopináth, which may be slightly the earliest of the series, is said to have been built by Ráesil Jí, a progenitor of the Shaikháwat branch of the Kachhwáhá Thákurs. This great Rájput family claim ultimate descent from Balojí, the third son of Rájá Uday Karan, who succeeded to the throne of Amber in 1389, A. D. To Balojí fell by inheritance the district of Amritsar, and after him to his son Mokal. This latter was long childless till through the blessing of the Muhammadan saint Shaikh Burhán, he became the father of a son called after his spiritual progenitor, Shaikh Jí. He is accounted the patriarch of all the Shaikháwat race, who for more than four centuries have continued to observe the obligations originally contracted with him. At the birth of every male infant, a goat is sacrificed, and while the kalimah is recited, the child is sprinkled with the blood. He is invested with the baddhiya, or cross-strings, usually worn by little Muhammadans ;

\* This word is a little questionable and may be read "Guravansa."

and when he laid them aside, he was bound to suspend them at the saint's dargáh still existing six miles from Achrol. For two years he wears a blue tunic and cap, and for life abstains from hog's flesh and all meat in which the blood remains. Shaikh Jí, by conquest from his neighbours, consolidated under his own sway 360 villages, in complete independence of the parent state of Amber: and they so continued till the time of Sawai Jay Síñha, the founder of Jaypur. Shaikh Jí's heir Ráemal had three sons, Non-karan, Rácsil and Gopál. By the advice of Devi Dás, a shrewd minister, who had been dismissed by Non-Karan, Rácsil proceeded to Dihlí with a following of 20 horse men, and so distinguished himself in the repulse of an Afghán invasion, that Akbar bestowed upon him the title of Darbári with a grant of land and the important command of 1,250 horse. Khandelá and Udaypur, then called Kasumbi, which he conquered from the Narbháns, a branch of the Chauháns, after contracting a marriage with the daughter of the prince of that race, became the principal cities of the Shaikháwat confederation. He accompanied his liege lord, Rájá Mán Síñha of Amber against the Mewér Rána Pratáp, and further distinguished himself in the expedition to Kábul. The date of his death is not known.\* The temple, of which he is the reputed founder, corresponds very closely both in style and dimensions with that of Madan Moban already described; and has a similar chapel attached to the south side of the sacrarium. It is, however, in a far more ruinous condition: the nave has entirely disappeared; the three towers have been levelled with the roof; and the entrance gateway of the court-yard is tottering to its fall. The special feature of the building is a curious arcade of three bracket arches, serving apparently no structural purpose, but merely added as an ornamental screen to the bare south wall. The choir-arch is also of handsome design, elaborately decorated with arabesque sculptures; but it is partly concealed from view by mean sheds which have been built up against it, while the interior is used as a stable and the north side is blocked by the modern temple. The votive offerings here made are estimated at Rs. 3,000 a year, in addition to which there is an endowment yielding an annual income of Rs. 1,200.

The temple of Jugal Kishor, the last of the old series, stands at the lower end of the town near the Kesi Ghát. Its construction is referred to the year *Sambat* 1684, *i. e.* 1627 A. D., in the reign of Jahángír, and the founder's name is preserved as Non-Karan. He is said to have been a Chauhán Thakur; but it is not improbable that he was the elder brother of Rácsil, who built the temple of Gopináth. The choir, which is slightly larger than in the other examples, being 25 feet square, has the principal entrance, as usual, at the east end; but is peculiar in having also, both north

\* The above particulars are extracted from Tod's *Rájasthán* and Professor Blochmann's *Áin i Akbari*.



and south, a small doorway under a hood supported on eight closely-set brackets carved into the form of elephants. The nave has been completely destroyed. Three other temples, dedicated respectively to Rádhá Ballabh, Chir Bihári, and Rádhá Dámodar, put forward claims to considerable antiquity; but, as buildings, they possess no special architectural merit. The same may be said of the Bengali temple of Sringár Baṭ, near the Madan Mohan, which, however, enjoys an annual income of Rs. 13,500, divided among three shareholders, who each take the religious services for four months at a time. The village of Jahángúrpur, on the opposite bank of the river, including the sacred grove of Bel-ban, forms part of the endowment.

Of the modern temples five claim special notice. The first in time of erection is the temple of Krishna Chandrama, built about the year 1810, at a cost of 25 lakhs, by the wealthy Bengali Káyath, Krishan Chandra Siñha, better known as the Lálá Bábu. It stands in a large court yard, which is laid out, not very tastefully, as a garden, and enclosed by a lofty wall of solid masonry, with an arched gateway at either end. The building is of quadrangular form, 160 feet in length, with a front central compartment of three arches and a lateral colonnade of five bays reaching back on either side towards the cella. The workmanship throughout is of excellent character, and the stone has been carefully selected. The two towers, or *sikharas*, are singularly plain; but have been wisely so designed, that their smooth polished surface may remain unsullied by rain and dust.

The founder's ancestor, Bábu Murli Mohan Siñha, son of one Har Krishna Siñha, was a wealthy merchant and landed proprietor at Kánda in Murshidábád. His heir, Bihári Lál Siñha, had three sons, Rádhá Gobind, Gangá Gobind, and Rádhá Charan: of these the last-named, on inheriting his share of the paternal estate, broke off connection with the rest of the family and has dropped out of sight. Rádhá Gobind took service under Alláh Virdí Khán and Siráj-ud-daulah, Nawábs of Murshidábád, and was by them promoted to posts of high honour. A rest-house for travellers and a temple of Rádhá-ballabh which he founded, are still in existence. He died without issue, leaving his property to his brother, Gangá Gobind, who took a prominent part in the revision of the Bengal settlement under Lord Wm. Bentinck in 1828. He built a number of dharmasálas for the reception of pilgrims and four temples at Rámehandrapur in Nadiyá. These latter have all been washed away by the river, but the images of the gods were transferred to Kánda. He also maintained several Sanskrit schools in Nadiyá; and distinguished himself by the extraordinary pomp with which he celebrated his father's obsequies, spending moreover every year on the anniversary of his death a lakh of rupees in religious observances. Gangá Gobind's son, Prán Kishan Siñha, still further augmented his magnificent patrimony before it passed in succession to his son, Krishan Chandra Siñha, better known under the soubriquet of 'the

Lálá Babú.' He held office first in Bardwán and then in Orísá, and when about thirty years of age, came to settle in the holy land of Braj. In connexion with his temple at Brindá-ban he founded also a rest-house, where a large number of pilgrims are still daily fed; the annual cost of the whole establishment being, as is stated, Rs. 22,000. He also enclosed the sacred tanks at Rádhá-kund with handsome gháts and terraces of stone at the cost of a lách. When some forty years of age, he renounced the world, and in the character of a Bairági continued for two years to wander about the woods and plains of Braj, begging his bread from day to day till the time of his death, which was accidentally caused by the kick of a horse at Gobardhan. He was frequently accompanied in his rambles by Mani Rám, father of the famous Seth Lakhmi Chand, who also had adopted the life of an ascetic. In the course of the ten years which the Lálá Babú spent as a worldling in the Mathurá district, he contrived to buy up all the villages most noted as places of pilgrimage in a manner which strikingly illustrates his hereditary capacity for business. The zamíndárs were assured that he had no pecuniary object in view, but only the strict preservation of the hallowed spots. Again, as in the days of Krishna, they would become the secluded haunts of the monkey and the peacock, while the former proprietors would remain undisturbed, the happy guardians of so many new Arcadius. Thus the wise man from the East picked up one estate after another at a price in every ease far below the real value, and in some cases for a purely nominal sum. However binding his fair promises may have been on the conscience of the pious Bábú, they were never recorded on paper, and therefore are naturally ignored by his absentee descendants and their agents, from whom any appeal *ad misericordiam* on the part of the impoverished representatives of the old owners of the soil meets with very scant consideration. The villages which he acquired in the Mathurá district are fourteen in number, viz., in the Kosi Parganah, Jáu; in Chhátá, Nandgánw, Barsána, Sanket, Karhela, and Háthiya; and in the home Parganah, Mathurá, Jait, Maholi and Nabí-pur, all these, except the last, being more or less places of pilgrimage. He also acquired by purchase from the Gújars the five villages of Pírpur, Gulálpur, Chamar-gaṛhí and Dhímri. For Nand-gánw he gave Rs. 900; for Barsána, Rs. 600; for Sanket, Rs. 800; and for Karhela, Rs. 500; the *annual* revenue derived from these places being now as follows; from Nandgánw, Rs. 6,712; from Barsána, Rs. 3,109; from Sanket, Rs. 1,642; and from Karhela, Rs. 1,900. It may also be noted that payment was invariably made in Brindá-ban rupees, which are worth only 13 or 14 annas each. The Bábú further purchased seventy-two villages in 'Aligaṛhí and Balandshahr from Rájá Bír Síñha, Chauhan; but twelve of these were sold at auction in the time of his heir, Babú Srí Náráyan Síñha. This latter, being a minor at his father's death, remained for a time under the tutelage of his mother, the Ráni Kai-

táni, who again, on his decease when only thirty years old, managed the estate till the coming of age of the two sons whom his widows had been specially authorized to adopt. The elder of the two, Pratáp Chandra, founded an English school at Kánda and Dispensary at Calcutta. He was for some time a Member of the Legislative Council of Bengal, received from Government the title of Bahádur, and was enrolled as a Companion of the Star of India. He died in 1867; his brother Isvarekhandra in 1863. The latter left, one son, Indrachand, who with his three cousins, Púran-chandra, Kári-chandra, and Sarad-chandra, the sons of Pratáp-chandra, are the present owners of the estate, which, during their minority is under the control of the Court of Wards, the General Manager being Mr. Robert Harvey of Calcutta.

The great temple, founded by Seth Gobind Dás and Rádhá Krishan, brothers of the famous millionaire Lakhmi Chand, is dedicated to Rang Jí, a Dakhani title of Vishnu. It is built in the Madras style, in accordance with plans supplied by their guru, the great Sanskrit scholar, Swámi Rangá-chári, a native of that part of India, who still presides over the magnificent establishment. The works were commenced in 1845 and completed in 1851, at a cost of 45 lákhs of Rupees. The outer walls measure 773 feet in length by 440 in breadth, and enclose a fine tank and garden in addition to the actual temple-court. This latter has lofty gate-towers, or *gopuras*, covered with a profusion of coarse sculpture. In front of the god is erected a pillar, or *dhvajastha stambha*, of copper gilt, sixty feet in height and also sunk some twenty-four feet more below the surface of the ground. This alone cost Rs. 10,000. The principal or western entrance of the outer court is surmounted by a pavilion, ninety-three feet high, constructed in the Mathurá style after the design of a native artist. In its graceful outlines and the elegance of its reticulated tracery, it presents a striking contrast to the heavy and misshapen masses of the Madras Gopura, which rises immediately in front of it. A little to one side of the entrance is a detached shed, in which the god's *rath*, or carriage, is kept. It is an enormous wooden tower in several stages, with monstrous effigies at the corners, and is brought out only once a year in the month of Chait during the festival of the Brahmotsav. The melá lasts for ten days, on each of which the god is taken in state from the temple along the road a distance of 690 yards to a garden where a pavilion has been erected for his reception. The procession is always attended with torches, music, and incense, and some military display contributed by the Rájá of Bharatpur; and on the closing day, when only the rath is used, there is a grand show of fireworks, which people of all classes congregate from long distances to see. The image, composed of the eight metals, is seated in the centre of the car, with attendant Brahmans standing beside to fan it with chaurics. Each of the Seths, with the rest of

the throng, gives an occasional hand to the ropes by which the ponderous machine is drawn; and by dint of much exertion, the distance is ordinarily accomplished in the space of about two and a half hours. On the other days of the melá the god has a wide choice of vehicles, being borne now on a páiki, a richly gilt tabernacle (*punya-kofhi*), a throne (*sinhásan*), or a tree, either the kadamb, or the tree of Paradise (*kalpavriksha*), now on some demi-god, as the sun or the moon, Garúra, Hanumán, or Sessa; now again on some animal, as a horse, an elephant, a lion, a swan, or the fabulous eight-footed *Sarabha*. The ordinary cost of one of these celebrations is over Rs. 20,000, while the annual expenses of the whole establishment amount to no less than Rs. 57,000, the largest item in that total being Rs. 30,000 for the religious services or *bhog*. Every day 500 of the Sri Vaishnava sect are fed at the temple, and every morning up to 10 o'clock a dolc of átá is given to any one who chooses to apply for it.

If the effect of the Seth's lavish endowment is impaired by the ill-judged adoption of a foreign style of architecture; still more is this error apparent in the temple of Rádhá Raman, completed within the last few years. The founder is Sah Kundan Lal of Lucknow, who has built on a design suggested by the modern secular buildings of that city. The principal entrance to the court yard is, in a grandiose way, decidedly effective; and the temple itself is constructed of the most costly materials and fronted with a colonnade of spiral marble pillars, each shaft being of a single piece, which though rather too attenuated, is unquestionably elegant. The mechanical execution is also good, but all is rendered of no avail by the abominable taste of the design. The façade with its uneouth pediment, flanked by sprawling monsters, and its row of life-size female figures in meretricious but at the same time most ungraceful attitudes, resembles nothing so much as a disreputable London casino; a severe, though unintended, satire on the character of the divinity to whom it is consecrated. Ten lákhs of rupees are said to have been wasted on its construction.

In striking contrast to this tasteless edifice is the temple of Rádhá Indra Kishor, built by Ráni Indrajit Kunwar, widow of Het Rám, Bráhmañ, zamindár of Tikári by Gayá. It has been six years in building, and was completed at the end of 1871. It is a square of seventy feet divided into three aisles of five bays each, with a fourth space of equal dimensions for the reception of the god. The *sikhara* is surmounted with a copper *kalas*, or finial, heavily gilt, which alone cost Rs. 5000. The piers are composed of four conjoined pillars, each shaft being a single piece of stone, brought from the Pahárpur quarry in Bharatpur territory. The building is raised on a high and enriched plinth, and the entire design is singularly light and graceful. Its cost has been three lákhs.

The temple of Rádhá Gopál, built by the Mahárájá of Gwáliár, under



the direction of his guru Brahmachári Giri-dhári Das is also entitled to some special notice. The interior is an exact counterpart of an Italian church, and would be an excellent model for our architects to follow, since it secures to perfection both free ventilation and a softened light. It consists of a nave 58 feet long, with four aisles, two on either side, a sacrarium 21 feet in depth and a narthex of the same dimensions at the entrance. The outer aisles of the nave, instead of being closed in with solid walls, have open arches stopped only with wooden bars; and the tier of windows above gives on to a balcony and verandah. Thus any glare of light is impossible. The building was opened for religious service in 1860, and as it stands has cost four lakhs of rupees. The exterior has a mean and unsightly appearance, which might be obviated by the substitution of reticulated stone tracery for the wooden bars of the outer arches below and a more substantial balcony and verandah in lieu of the present rickety erection above.

There are in Brindá-ban no secular buildings of any great antiquity. The oldest is the court, or Ghera, as it is called, of Sawái Jay Síñha, the founder of Jaypur, who made Brindá-ban an occasional residence during the time that he was Governor of the Province of Ágrah (1721-1728). It is a large walled enclosure with a pavilion at one end consisting of two aisles divided into five bays by piers of coupled columns of red sandstone. The river front of the town has a succession of gháts reaching for a distance of about a mile and half; the one highest up the stream being the Káli-mardan Ghát with the kadamb tree from which Krishna plunged into the water to encounter the great serpent Káliya; and at the other end Kesi Ghát, where he slew the equine demon of that name. Near the latter are two handsome mansions built by the Ránis Kishori and Lachhmi, consorts of Ranjít Síñha and Randhír Síñha, two successive Rájás of Bharatpur. In both, the arrangement is identical with that of a mediæval college, carried out on a miniature scale but with extreme elaboration of detail. The buildings are disposed in the form of a quadrangle, with an enriched gateway in the centre of one front and opposite it the chapel, of more imposing elevation than the ordinary domestic apartments which constitute the two flanks of the square. In Ráni Lachhmi's *kunj*, (such being the distinctive name for a building of this character) the temple front is a very rich and graceful composition, with a colonnade of five arches standing on a high plinth, which like every part of the wall surface is covered with the most delicate carving, and shaded above by overhanging eaves supported on bold brackets. The work of the elder Ráni is of much plainer character; and a third *kunj*, which stands a little lower down the river, close to the temple of Dhir Sanir, built by Thákur Badan Síñha, the father of Súraj Mal, the first of the Bharatpur Rájás, though large, has no architectural pretensions whatever. The most striking

of the whole series is, however, the Gangā Mohan Kunj, built in the next generation by Gangā, Súraj Mal's Rāni. The river front, which is all that was ever completed, has a high and massive basement story, which, on the land side as seen from the interior of the court, becomes a mere plinth for the support of a majestic double eolister with broad and lofty arch and massive clustered pier. The style is precisely the same as that which prevails in the Garden Palace at Dīg, a work of the same chief; who, however rude and uncultured himself, appears to have been able to appreciate and command the services of the highest available talent whether in the arts of war or peace.

## 2. Gokula.

The town of Mahā-ban is some five or six miles from Mathurā, lower down the stream and on the opposite bank of the Jamunā. It stands a little in land, about a mile distant from Gokul, which latter place has appropriated the more famous name, though it is in reality only the modern water side suburb of the ancient town. All the traditional sites of Krishna's adventures, described in the Purānas as being at Gokul, are shewn at Mahā-ban, which in short is the place intended whenever Gokul is mentioned in Sanskrit literature. However, in consequence of its retaining the more famous name, Gokul is popularly credited with a far greater amount of sanctity. From the opposite side of the river it has a very picturesque appearance; but on nearer approach its tortuous streets are found to be inconceivably mean, crowded, and unsavoury, in the rains mere channels for the floods, which pour down through them to the Jamunā, and at all other times of the year so rough and broken by the action of the water, that the rudest wheeled vehicle can with difficulty make its way along them. Strenuous efforts have been made within the last few years to improve its sanitation, but the Gosāin Mu'āfidārs, the descendants (through his only son Biṭṭhal-nāth) of the famous Vallabhāchāraj, who settled there in *Sambat* 1535, are most impracticable and intolerant of reform. The filthy condition of the place is largely owing to the enormous number of cattle driven within its walls every night, which render it really what the name denotes 'a cow-stall,' rather than a human habitation. The temples amount to a prodigious number, but they are all mean in appearance and recent in date; and the only noteworthy ornament of the town is a large masonry tank constructed some thirty years ago by a Sethi, named Chuma.

The trees on its margin are always white with flocks of large water-fowl, of a quite distinct species from any to be found elsewhere in the neighbourhood. They are a new colony, being all descended from a few pairs which casually settled there no more than 10 or 12 years ago. Their plumage is peculiar and ornamental, but difficult to obtain, as the birds are considered

to enjoy the benefit of sanctuary; and on one occasion when a party of soldiers from the Mathurá cantonments attempted to shoot some of them, the towns people rose *en masse* for their protection.

Mahá-ban, the true Gokul, is by legend closely connected with Mathurá; for Krishna was born at the one and cradled at the other. Both, too, make their first appearance in history together and under most unfortunate circumstances as sacked by Mahmuúd of Ghazni in the year 1017, A.D. From the effects of this catastrophe, it would seem that Mahá-ban was never able to recover itself. It is casually mentioned in connection with the year 1234 A. D., by Minháj i Siráj, a contemporary writer, as one of the gathering-places for the imperial army sent by Shams ud-dín against Kálinjar; and the Emperor Bábar, in his Memoirs, incidentally refers to it, as if it were a place of some importance still, in the year 1526, A. D.; but the name occurs in the pages of no other chronicle; and at the present day, though it is the seat of a Tahsili, it can scarcely be called more than a considerable village. Within the last few years one or two large and handsome private residences have been built with fronts of carved stone in the Mathurá style; but the temples are all exceedingly mean and of no antiquity. The largest and also the most sacred is that dedicated to Mathurá-náth, which boasts of a pyramidal tower, or *sikhara*, of some height and bulk, but constructed only of brick and plaster. The Bráhman in charge used to enjoy an endowment of Rs. 2 a day, the gift of Sindhia, but this has long lapsed. There are two other small shrines of some interest: in the one the demon Trinávart is represented as a pair of enormous wings overhanging the infant god; the other bears the dedication of Mahá Mall Rác, the great champion Prince, a title given to Krishna after his discomfiture of the various evil spirits sent against him by Kansa.

Great part of the town is occupied by a high hill, partly natural and partly artificial, extending over more than 100 bighas of land, where stood the old fort. Upon its most elevated point is shewn a small cell, called Syám Lála, believed to mark the spot where Jasodá gave birth to Maya, or Joga-nidra, substituted by Vasudeva for the infant Krishna. But by far the most interesting building is a covered court called Nandas Palaeo, or more commonly the Assi Khamba, *i. e.* the Eighty Pillars. It is divided by five rows of sixteen pillars each into four aisles, or rather into a centre and two narrower side aisles with one broad outer cloister. The external pillars of this outer cloister are each of one massive shaft, cut into many narrow facets, with two horizontal bands of carving: the capitals are decorated either with grotesque heads or the usual four squat figures. The pillars of the inner aisles vary much in design, some being exceedingly plain and others as richly ornamented with profuse and often graceful arabesques. Three of the more elaborate are called respectively the Satya,

Dwápar, and Treta Yug ; while the name of the Kali Yug is given to another somewhat plainer. All these interior pillars, however, agree in consisting as it were of two short columns set one upon the other. The style is precisely similar to that of the Hindú colonnades by the Qutb Minár at Delhi ; and both works may reasonably be referred to about the same age. As it is probable that the latter were not built in the years immediately preceding the fall of Delhi in 1194, so also it would seem that the court at Mahá-ban must have been completed before the assault of Mahmúd in 1017 ; for after that date the place was too insignificant to be selected as the site of so elaborate an edifice. Thus Fergusson's conjecture is confirmed that the Delhi pillars are to be ascribed to the ninth or tenth century. Another long-mooted point may also be considered as almost definitely set at rest, for it can scarcely be doubted that the pillars as they now stand at Mahá-ban occupy their original position. Fergusson, who was unaware of their existence, in his notice of the Delhi cloister, doubts whether it now stands as originally arranged by the Hindús, or whether it had been taken down and re-arranged by the conquerors ; but concludes as most probable that the former was the case, and that it was an open colonnade surrounding the Palace of Prithi Ráj. " If so," he adds, " it is the only instance known of Hindú pillars being left undisturbed." General Cunningham comments upon these remarks, finding it utterly incredible that any architect, designing an original building and wishing to obtain height, should have recourse to such a rude expedient as constructing two distinct pillars, and then without any disguise piling up one on the top of the other. But, however extraordinary the procedure, it is clear that this is what was done at Mahá-ban, as is proved by the outer row of columns, which are each of one unbroken shaft, yet precisely the same in height as the double pillars of the inner aisles. The roof is flat and perfectly plain except in two compartments, where it is cut into a pretty quasi-dome of concentric multifoil circles. Mothers come here for their purification on the sixth day after child-birth—*chhatthi púja*—and it is visited by enormous crowds of people for several days about the anniversary of Krishna's birth in the month of Bhádon. A representation of the infant god's cradle is displayed to view, with his foster-mother's churn and other domestic articles. The place being regarded not exactly as a temple, but as Nanda and Jasoda's actual dwelling-house, Europeans are allowed to walk about in it with perfect freedom. Considering the size, the antiquity, the artistic excellence, the exceptional archæological interest, the celebrity amongst natives, and the close proximity to Mathurá of this building, it is perfectly marvellous that it found no mention whatever in the archæological abstract prepared in every district by orders of Government a few years ago, nor even in the costly work compiled by Lieut. Cole, the Superintendent of the Archæological Survey, which professes to illustrate the architectural antiquities of Mathurá and its neighbourhood.



Let into the outer wall of the Nand Bhavan is a small figure of Buddha; and it is said that whenever foundations are sunk within the precincts of the fort, many fragments of sculpture—of Buddhist character, it may be presumed—have been brought to light: but hitherto they have always been buried again, or broken up as building materials. Doubtless, Mahá-ban was the site of some of those Buddhist monasteries, which the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hian distinctly states existed in his time on both sides of the river. And further, whatever may be the exact Indian word concealed under the form Klisoboras, or Clisobora, given by Arrian and Pliny as the name of the town between which and Mathurá the Jamuná flowed—*Amnis Jomanes in Gangem per Palibothros decurrit inter oppida Methora et Clisobora*, Pliny, Hist. Nat. vi, 22—it may be concluded with certainty that Mahá-ban is the site intended. Its other literary names are Brihad-vana, Brihad-aranya, Gokula, and Nanda-gráma; and no one of these, it is true, in the slightest resembles the word Clisobora, which would seem rather to be a corruption of some compound in which 'Krishna' was the first element, possibly some epithet or descriptive title taken by the foreign traveller for the ordinary proper name. General Cunningham in his 'Ancient Geography' identifies Clisobora (read in one MS., as Cyrisoborka) with Brindá-ban, assuming that Kálíkavartta, or 'Kalika's Whirlpool,' was an earlier name of the town, in allusion to Krishna's combat with the serpent Kálíka. But in the first place, the Jamuná does not flow *between* Mathurá and Brindá-ban, seeing that both are on the same bank; secondly, the ordinary name of the great serpent is not Kálíka, but Káliya; and thirdly, it does not appear upon what authority it is so boldly stated that "the earlier name of the place was Kálíkavartta." Upon this latter point, a reference has been made to the great Brindá-ban Pandit, Swámi Rangáchari, who if any one might be expected to speak with positive knowledge, and his reply was that in the course of all his reading, he had never met with Brindá-ban under any other name than that which it now bears. In order to establish the identification of Clisobora with Mahá-ban, it was necessary to notice General Cunningham's counter theory and to condemn it as unsound; ordinarily the accuracy of his research and the soundness of his judgment are entitled to the highest respect.

The glories of Mahá-ban are told in a special (interpolated) section of the Brahmánda Puráná, called the Brihad-vana Mahátmya. In this, its *tirthas*, or holy places, are reckoned to be twenty-one in number as follows:

*Eka-vinsati-tirthena yuktam bhúrigunánvítam.*

*Yamal-árjuna panyatam, Nanda-kúpam tathaiva cha,*

*Chintá-harana Bráhmándam, kundam Sarasvatam tatha,*

*Sarasvati shilá tatra, Vishnu-kunda-samanvítam,*

*Karna-kúpam, Krishna-kundam, Gopa-kúpam tathaiva cha,*

*Ramanam-ramana-sthánam, Nárada-sthánam eva cha,  
Pátaná-patana sthánam, Trinávarttákhya pátanam,  
Nanda-harmyam, Nanda-geham, Ghátam Ramana-samjñakam,  
Mathuránáthobha-kshetram punyam pápa-pranásanam,  
Janna-sthánam tu Sheshasya, jananam Yogamáyaya.*

Some little distance outside the town, a small bridge carries the Mathurá road across a ravine called Pátaní khár, the Pátaná-patana-sthánam of the above lines. It is a mile or more in length, reaching down to the bank of the Jamuná, and as the name denotes, is supposed to have been caused by the passage of Pátaná's giant body. Similarly in Mathurá, when Kansa's corse was dragged down to the Visránt Ghát, it made a deep channel in the ground like a torrent in flood, as described in the Vishnu Purána :

*Gauravenáti mahatá parikhá tena krishyatá  
Kritá Kansasya dehena, vegeneva mahámbhasah.*

This is still known as the Kans Khár. It has been arched over, and like the Fleet Ditch in London, forms now the main sewer of the city, discharging itself into the river at the very spot where Bráhmans most delight to bathe. The remainder of the twenty-one tirthas have either been already noticed in the course of this sketch, or commemorate such well-known incidents in Krishna's childhood that any further explanation is unnecessary.

On the high road to Sa'dábád, some six miles beyond Mahá-ban, is the modern tirtha of Baladeva Jí. The temple, from which the town derives its name, is of considerable celebrity and well-endowed, but neither handsome nor well kept. It includes within its precincts several cloistered quadrangles, where accommodation is provided for pilgrims and the resident priests. The actual temple stands at the back of one of the inner courts, and on each of its three disengaged sides has an arcade of three arches with broad flanking piers. On each of these three sides a door gives access to the cella, which is surmounted by a squat pyramidal tower. Beside the principal figure, Baladeva, who is generally very richly dressed and bedizened, it contains another life-sized statue supposed to represent his spouse, Revati. Apparently she was an after-thought, being put away in a corner off the dais. In an adjoining court is shewn the small vaulted chamber, which is said to have been the original shrine before the present more pretentious edifice was erected by a Delhi Seth, named Syám Dás, some time in the last century. Outside the temple is a brick tank about eighty yards square, called variously Kshír-Ságar, 'the sea of milk,' or Kshír-kunḍ, or Balbhadrakunḍ. It is in rather a dilapidated condition, and the surface of the water is always covered with a repulsive thick green scum, which, however, does not deter the pilgrims either from bathing or drinking. In this tank it is said that about the year 1550 was accidentally discovered the image of Baladeva which has ever since been regarded as the local divinity. The original

village, called Rirá, still exists as a hamlet of the modern town. It belonged to a family of Játs; but their estate was transferred by sale to the temple Pándas, who also enjoy an endowment of four other villages rent free, a grant from Sindbia. They are all descendants of the Bairági by whom the image was produced, and are by caste Ahivásis, a singularly low and illiterate pseudo-Brahmanical tribe, who as it would seem are not known in any part of India beyond the Mathurá district. The name is said to be derived from the great serpent (*ahi*) káliya, and they represent the village of Sanrakh, near the Káli-mardan Ghát at Brindá-ban, as their first home.

*Note.*—The interesting temple of Hari-deva at Gobardhan was in perfect preservation, excepting only the loss of its two towers, till the end of the year 1871. The roof of the nave then began to give away, and now has entirely fallen in, all save one compartment, which happily remains as a guide to the architect, in case a restoration should be undertaken. Funds for the work are not altogether wanting, as there is now in the local treasury a deposit of more than Rs. 3000 available for the purpose. This sum arises from the rents of the nu'afi village of Bhagosa, a permanent endowment, with regard to which, after long dispute, the Civil Court has decided that it must be expended strictly on the maintenance of the temple and its services, and cannot be appropriated by the shareholders to their own private uses. It could not be devoted to a better purpose than the repair of the fabric; and in case of want of unanimity among the shareholders a further order of the Court to that effect is all that is required.

*On a new king of Bengal (Alauddin Firúz Sháh), and notes on the Husaini kings of Bengal and their conquest of Chátgáon (Chittagong).*  
—By H. BLOCHMANN, M. A., Calcutta Madrasah.

Some time ago, Mr. Walter M. Bourke sent me two Arabic and Persian Inscriptions from Kalnah, on the Bhágirathi, one from a ruined mosque, and the other from the Dargáh of a saint of the name of Sháh Majlis. The latter inscription has not been deciphered, the stone being worn away; but the name of Husain Sháh was legible. The former, of which a yellowish impression had been taken, revealed the name of a new king. It was, however, too unclear to admit of more than a tentative reading, and I was fortunate to obtain, in June last, two clear black impressions. The stone of this valuable inscription, I am informed, lies on the ground in front of a ruined mosque, and is, like all inscriptions in this part of the country, of black basalt. The mosque, called the 'Sháhi Masjid,' lies outside Kalnah, about half a mile from the river, and is overgrown with jungle. Occasionally prayers are read in it, and the *Khádim*s in charge hold a few bighahs of land. The Dargáh, mentioned above, is called 'Sháh Majlis Astánah,' lies also near the river, and is said to be under the Mutawalliship of the Maharájah